

33. NOTES ON *CLEOME RUTIDOSPERMA* DC. IN INDIA

This paper reports the occurrence of *Cleome rutidosperma* DC. (Capparaceae) an African weed, in Assam and West Bengal, with additional notes on taxonomic characters and possible modes of distribution.

The species now grows wild in different parts of Lower Gangetic Plains and Brahmaputra valley. It is a decumbent diffuse annual having trifoliolate leaves and pink flowers with bluish anthers, flowering at the beginning of the monsoon. The taxon has been identified as *Cleome rutidosperma* DC. (Capparidaceae). It has been described and illustrated by M. Jacobs in *FLORA MALESIANA* Ser. 1, 6(1): 104-105, Dec. 1960 and P. K. Mukherjee in *Ind. For.* 95(4): 237, 1969. Some characters of taxonomic importance which have not been included in these descriptions are noted here to facilitate the identification of the plant in the field.

The taxon has been reported already by Mukherjee (1969) from the Lady Brabourne College Compound, Calcutta and on Wastelands, Calcutta University Campus, Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta, apparently as an escape from cultivation. The exsiccatae at CAL herbarium and also fresh collection from the vicinity of Calcutta, however, leaves no doubt that it is now naturalized in eastern India. The paucity of report of its occurrence may be due to difficulty in identification. Its report from Burma and Malaya possibly suggests its introduction there by human agency at an earlier date and subsequent migration through Assam into eastern India. It may also be looked for in Tamil Nadu area which is on the trade route from Africa to Malaysia.

BOTANICAL SURVEY OF INDIA,  
HOWRAH-711 103,  
February 28, 1978.

*Cleome rutidosperma* DC. Prodr. 1: 241, 1824; Jacobs in *Fl. Males.* Ser. 1, 6(1): 104-105, figs. 30 et 33, Dec. 1960; Iltis in *Brittonia* 12: 290-294, 1960.

Annual diffuse herb pinkish on young nodes. Petioles up to 5 cm. long, grooved adaxially. Flowers in the axils of leaves of three leaflets (not in the axils of reduced leaves as reported in Malaysian and American plants). Sepals awl-shaped, fleshy (when fresh), green pinkish at tips. Petals pinkish (no yellow transverse band, in fresh specimens as recorded in American plants). Anthers bluish, filaments faint blue. Fruits slightly flat, bilaterally ribbed, straight, long-beaked. Seeds many, arranged in 4-rows on 1-2 mm. green (fresh) placentae.

*Specimens examined:*

INDIA: *West Bengal:* flowering and fruiting 10-7-75 on open amphibic waste lands of the district of 24-Parganas (South Barasat, Sonarpur) and Kasba, at the outskirts of Calcutta, *R. B. Majumdar* 7502 (CAL); 24-Parganas, Bansdroni, near Tallygunge. 31-5-1965 rare in Waste places, flowers pinkish white *R. L. Mitra* 147 (CAL), Dakshmin Barasat, 10-7-1975, common in open waste land, flowers pinkish filaments faint blue. *R. N. Banerjee & Barin Ghosh* s.n. (CAL); Indian Botanic Gardens, 18th Aug. 1975, Procumbent annual herbs, flowers pinkish, not common, *O. P. Misra* s.n. (CAL); *Assam:* Gauhati, a flowering and fruiting specimen, 1969, *A. C. Datta* 85 (CAL).

*Distribution:* Trop. Africa, United States and S. America, Malaysia, Singapore and Burma, Eastern India—Bengal and Assam.

BARIN GHOSH  
R. N. BANERJEE